

# Behind the Bolted Door?

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what that must signify—surely you could have told us about that before? And why didn't you?"

"Because well I knowed you'd take it exactly as you're taking it now!"

"As we're taking it now?"

"That she could only 'ave made 'er will like that, and in such 'aste and 'urry as to 'ave two servants witness it, because she 'erself knowed what was coming, and intended it! You're thinking already of the words she wrote on that murder note! And you take it now that she was consenting! But she wasn't! She wasn't! I said it before, and knowing 'er as I did, I'll always say it!"

"Yes," said D. Hope haggardly; "and so will I!"

And, partly to get away from that at least, Laneham once more went back to the voice.

"Jimmy, listen. You spoke of the voice we heard, the voice that cried 'my God!' as 'fearful.' You mean that the one you heard was not?"

"Why, sir, why," he seemed again to be evading,—"I never thought of it as so. It wasn't loud enough."

"Wasn't loud enough? Good heavens!"

"No, sir," he whispered, "no. I—sometimes I was 'ardly sure I 'eard it at all."

"Jimmy!"

But once more, if for the moment the Doctor could not go on, Willings in his turn took it up:

"Jimmy, was it the voice of any one now living?"

Again the sick white perspiration mottled out in great drops upon the little Cockney's temples.

"Mr. Willings, I—I don't know."

"I'll ask my question in another way. It's important, Jimmy; we've got to know whose voice that was, and the only clue we've had so far—if you can call such a ghastly idea a clue—is what Mr. Grady of the Electric Protection Service told us last night. The voice sounded like the voice of his workman, 'Old Throaty,' the man who put in the jewel-safe for Mrs. Fisher; and Old Throaty, Jimmy, is dead. Did you, Jimmy, ever think that it was his voice you heard?"

The little man's hands gripped the chair; he moistened his lips, and his answer came in a thick whisper.

"Yes, sir," he gasped. "That's what I thought, Mr. Willings. I tell you, I know the voice, and that's whose it is."

PERHAPS an hour had passed. They still sat there, talking little, but waiting on the chance that the Judge might yet return. Laneham had left them a moment, to speak to Jacobs.

"And, Mr. Willings, sir," said Jimmy, "if, because I'm still 'olding something back, you're going to feel to-night that you can't believe in me—if, when it's not two days since you and Miss 'Ope, 'ere, were h'offering your lives for mine—"

"No, no; we don't feel so at all."

"For I'm a man too, for h'all I've been at service, an' I'm feeling sick to the soul right now—"

"I know you are, Jimmy. But no more, no more. I guess we've all of us had enough and too much for to-night. Let's thank the Lord that now, at last, it's ended."

Ended! While he spoke the street bell was ringing again. And a minute later the downstairs man came up to say that Professor Fisher and Inspector McGloyne were in the hall. Two more policemen were with them, too. What did they want? He couldn't rightly understand.

But McGloyne had heard the question from below. And, with his foot already on the stairs, he was answering it himself.

"I'll tell you what I want! I want to know right here an' now who's runnin' the Department! I want to get to the bottom of that Maddalina biz! An', while

I'm here, by-y heaven, I'm just going to have your Jimmy butler lad!"

Ended? That night ended? They were to feel afterward that it had only just begun. And with the hours to follow the mystery of those bolted doors in the Casa Grande was to enter upon a chapter wholly new.

THEY came up. And the big detective had evidently come from the Bureau in a single, raging burst of speed. His lips, his fingers, his very body, still trembled with that insult known only to the man who finds, or believes he finds, that he is no longer considered fit to do his work. For all his hard-shell brutality, too, one could not but feel in him a sort of honesty and sense of honor.

"Dr. Laneham," he said, "I don't know what the Professor, here, has got to say to you. He was in the Bureau to-night when we heard of Maddalina. But if he feels like I do—"

"I haf this to say," broke in Fisher—"and only this. If you haf Jimmy here, you shall gif him up, and at once."

At that moment his frenzied glance fell on the little butler, half hidden behind D. Hope.

"Professor!" he cried, cringing beneath the glare, "In the name o' Gord! You don't believe it was me that done it? You can't! You couldn't!"

"You say you did not!" the Professor answered fiercely. "You will find the police know more! That iss he, Inspector; that iss he!"

If, on this the first day after Mrs. Fisher's funeral, he was no longer acting like a maniac, he was none the more lovable for that. McGloyne himself now gave no heed to him.

"It's got to come to a show-down, an' nothin' more to it!" he shouted at the Doctor. "Whether the Commissioner is with you or whether he ain't, the kind of thing that's been put on me to-night, when I'm supposed to be coverin' the job as detective head—" He stopped, his voice choked out in helpless rage.

"I know," said Laneham, "I know. But, Inspector, will you let me ask you just one thing? If you're covering this job as it ought to be covered, how was it possible, two nights ago, for the thief or murderer to come back again?"

"How was it possible? How was it possible?" The veins on his big neck swelled and knotted. "Because there wasn't any come-back, see? There wasn't any!"

"I have only the 'E. P.' evidence for it."

"Yes, that's all you have got! They send in a fake alarm, they stick a big knife in the wall, and then they raise the cry that the murderer has walked right through my men and into the apartment again. God! Any way they can find to do me dirt! It's about in the same class as your ghost voice an' spirit rappin'! A come-back! In all my twenty years I've never had one, an' I never will have, an' any one knowin' only how I've placed my boys up there at the Casa Grande will know that, by the livin', there couldn't 'a been!"

"I can understand your believing that there wasn't."

"I believe it, an' I know it!" He struck his hand down upon the table. "If you want to go up there right now I'll prove it to you!"

"And what of Jimmy? What of him?"

"Yess, yess," cried Fisher.

"I'll tell you what about Jimmy. If you or any man can show me where I been leavin' holes, you can keep him—see? You can keep him!"

THE turn came as quickly as that. To quiet Fisher, it was agreed that McGloyne's two men should be left in charge. Willings went with the Doctor to get his great-coat. And presently they were all on their way together in McGloyne's big green police car.

As they neared the corner of that Casa



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